The Commonweal

April 4, 1952

My Russian Friends

Julie Bedier

Japan and American Ways

Hugh H. and Mabel M. Smythe

KARL STERN • JOHN A. LYNCH • JEROME SMILEY

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

"Negative" and "Positive" Anti-Communism

IN THESE pages last week Father Victor White described Marxism — the idea — as being the most powerful of all contemporary challenges to religion, and probably the most powerful of all time. As such it has won the allegiance of many brilliant intellects, in Asia, in Europe and even in this country.

Marxism has a strong intellectual appeal ("intoxicating" Father White calls it) and an internal dynamism capable of tapping genuine idealism. It seems footless here to go on about the way that idealism is perverted and destroyed by the evil thing which enslaves it. That should be obvious enough by this time. What is pertinent is to recognize that Marxism has this peculiar power of feeding on the finest human aspirations.

Paul Claudel, the French Catholic poet, once said that "youth demands the heroic." Communism has succeeded in supplying the Cause wherever the heroism is to be found. In Europe and the Orient today, Marxism has the allegiance of thousands of young intellectuals, as during the Thirties it did in this country. One does not solve the problem this presents by berating intellectuals in general and the "pseudo-intellectuals" of the Left in particular.

As an idea, Communism has been called the ultimate Christian heresy. The doctrine perverts the religious impulse; it provides an ersatz meaning and final end for human existence; it offers a mock ideal of universal brotherhood; it takes root deep in the soul and demands an uncompromising devotion. ("The ape of God and His Christ," Father White calls it.)

Like all heresies Communism has brought to the fore a question to be settled, a truth to be re-evaluated and placed in focus. With Communism it is the social question. For tired, hungry, exploited masses of men, Communism, with its drive spearheaded by the intellectual élite, often represents an acceptable faith, a reasonable hope and an ideal of ultimate charity between men.

It is especially maddening to people who understand the social dynamism of Christianity itself when the reaction to this Communist challenge is compounded of rhetoric, reaction and the seeming denial of the very religious values Marxism feeds on.

Such Christian critics know that men and women who are burdened with the daily cares of keeping body and soul together will rarely master the intricacies of Dialectical Materialism (no more than pious peasants speak knowingly of Thomistic metaphysics) but that they can be drawn by the fire, zeal and false hopes of Marxist apostles, especially when, wrongly or rightly, they are inclined to attribute their present ills to those who carry the splashiest anti-Communist banners. It seems to such critics, as it does to Father White, that in these cases the Communists "have stolen Christ's thunder," while Christians stand by hurling negations and condemnations.

THE spectacular successes of Communism (in China, Italy, France, for instance) rest primarily on this pseudo-religious fervor and messianic dynamism. When people are reasonably content, no longer hungry, decently clothed and housed, they are not quite so intent on finding a messiah. If only for this reason, we in our well-fed United States—thinking of Communism solely as the aberration of the intelligentsia, not of the proletariat—find it hard to understand such a thing, say, as the large popular Communist vote in Italy.

If Communism were only an idea, competing in the marketplace with such religious ideals as Christianity offers and such political ideals of freedom as are incarnated in our own democracy, the situation would be a whole lot clearer than it is. The anti-Communist's task, in that case, though no less difficult would at least be clear-cut. But the fact that behind the Marxist idea a power-

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ful political and military force stands ready to move on orders complicates things tremendously.

It means that while with one hand we counter the Marxist with bread, we have been forced to carry a gun in the other. It means that we have had to make military and political liaisons with some of the hated symbols of reaction. It means that we have had to stand as those who urge self-defense (with all that means: cannons, guns, armies, possible wars, and less rather than more butter) while the Communist cries "Peace, peace!" It means that much as we might want our message to be that of a savior it is necessarily spoken in military accents, and masses of people are left wondering where the savior leaves off and the soldier begins.

This is too bad, of course. But as long as Communism is a political and military force as well as an idea at large in the world, it can not be otherwise. We stand in a difficult, dangerous position. By succeeding brilliantly on one front of the anti-Communist war, we are likely to lose completely on the other. If we neglect one in order to strengthen the other—accent the military at the expense of building up the kind of social order where Communism will no longer be provided with such fertile ground to take root in—we fall into a trap. If we minimize the military in order to put all our efforts into the "positive approach," we fall into another. A balance between "negative" and "positive" anti-Communism must be maintained. We have to lean heavily on both soldier and saint. . .

When certain critics of the "negative" approach cry that force never yet killed an idea and that Communism must be fought with the weapons of social justice and charity, they are certainly right—but only half right.

We can understand their anger when they know that billions are being spent on armaments and then read, as we did recently in a Catholic magazine: "U. S. Ambassador to India, Chester Bowles, wants a billion dollars in US aid for India. A noble thought indeed, but how can we do it? Taxes and inflation are ruining us now."

We can understand, too, how one who has studied papal anti-Communism (especially Pius XI's *On Atheistic Communism*) realizes that the works of mercy—surely foreign aid qualifies?— are the most effective measures to overcome the dynamism of Communism—the works of mercy and the spirit of poverty and detachment. We can understand the position of those who grasp Marxism well enough to know that neither arms nor Sears Roebuck catalogues will ever defeat the Communist idea.

Yet all that is not to say that we think their criticism is always balanced or that they always take the whole complex situation into account. If Communism were not an active political and military force, we would have no argument. But to ignore the Red armies in Europe and the Orient, and the threat they offer, in order to be ideally "positive," would be suicidal.

NEXT WEEK

WILLIAM P. CLANCY writes on Leisure in a Bourgeois World.

"Manufacturers of television sets and producers of endless third-rate movies have made their fortunes providing an answer, an answer itself symptomatic of the problem. It does not seem far-fetched to speculate that future historians may mark down this disappearance of any popular regard for, or understanding of, the nature of leisure—and at the same time the near hysterical search for external diversion—as one of the major culture crises of modern civilization."

A Chance to Live as a Man

AS President Truman outlined it in his special message to Congress, the basic reasons for aid for Europe's DP's have changed but little. The original Displaced Persons Act runs out the middle of this year. Yet refugees from totalitarianism still account for a large part of Western Europe's five millions of surplus population.

It is best to lead off the argument from the vantage point of human needs. Whether they are newly escaped from behind the Iron Curtain(the present rate is 20,000 per month) or long resident in DP camps because their homelands are in chains, DP's suffer most from the blight of idleness. Talents, skills, ambitions, are wasting away unused; morale is shattered. Young men and young women desirous of marrying and setting up their own households are thwarted. They have no work, no place to go. Older breadwinners languish in their cramped quarters for want of a chance to make a new start in the world.

And of what are these war victims guilty, what is their crime? They have refused to knuckle under to dictators; they have wanted to call their souls their own. They have fought for a decent

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degree of freedom for themselves and for their children. Many of the newer exiles have gone through fire and storm to cross the frontier between serfdom and what they believed would be human freedom. These are the men and women the President has in mind.

From the angle of the countries now sheltering these brave refugees the argument is no less cogent. Feeding and caring for them constitute a heavy burden that acts as a dragweight on European Recovery: the continued drain on their national resources—from supporting these people in unwanted idleness—serves to defeat the constructive work of the Marshall Plan and the Mutual Security Act. It weakens the defenses of Europe.

If the United States should desist from aiding the DP's, American prestige would be impaired in the eyes of the world. It would lessen the determination of our allies to stand firm against the Soviet if we were to abandon such harried fighters for freedom. It would hold up to scorn whatever pretensions America has to humanitarianism. We cannot do otherwise than provide further aid.

Moreover, the new program would benefit from certain practical circumstances. There is the invaluable experience of the International Refugee Organization, which since the war has settled a million persons all round the globe. There is the know-how developed by American families, church groups, state commissions and private relief agencies in establishing more than a third of that number in rural districts and cities throughout this land. There are our own extensive manpower needs in farm and factory.

Thus the three hundred thousand additional DP's Mr. Truman would bring to this country within the next three years could be readily absorbed in this nation of great distances and over a hundred and fifty millions. The new international migration committee has fallen heir to the IRO ships, while both European governments and private agencies will pay transportation charges. The expenses and practical difficulties are not nearly so great as they once were.

If the United States is to play a leading part in the rebuilding and defense of the free world, we must take a vital interest in such matters as migration and resettlement. Canada and Australia will absorb more DP's than we do; resettlement in Latin America can be greatly expanded. But our task is to welcome our share of these anti-totalitarians to our shores and to play a leading role in international planning of resettlement the world over.

Nehru's New Stove

THERE seems to be no argument that India's primary need is to increase her food production. Industrialization comes second. One of the most solid of this new State's first accomplishments is the erection of a large fertilizer factory. Its opening was graced by the presence of Prime Minister Nehru and inspired nationwide rejoicing. That is one means whereby India will be able to produce more food.

In view of the key importance of fertilizer in restoring the fertility of exhausted soils, Mr. Nehru's stove is another phenomenon of crucial interest. For the predominant fuel in India is dung, manure that could otherwise be used for increasing agricultural production. The Prime Minister now uses a solar cooker equivalent in heating power to a 300-watt electric stove. A four-foot curved aluminum bowl reflects and focuses the rays of the sun on a glass over which a cooking pot is suspended. It is as uncomplicated as that.

When the new solar cooker goes into mass production later in the year, the effect will be widespread. The Indian capital is said to have sunshine three out of every four days in the year, while other parts of India get even greater solar energy. Dung can then be used for the fields. Moreover the new solar cooker can be produced to sell for about ten dollars.

Although the man in charge of the labratory which produced the cooking unit once stayed in the United States and studied at Northwestern, Mr. Nehru's new stove would seem to be a symbol of Oriental ingenuity. It has by-passed plenty of inefficient intermediary stages to go directly to the source of all our heat and light. It is as simple as many of our gadgets are intricate, as cheap as ours are costly.

Defense Economy

THE tax-payer is not yet born who does not yearn for economy in government spending—at least on matters that do not directly and obviously affect his own interests. Natural as this attitude is, it necessarily acts as a heavy drag when it comes to spending for national defense. Those charged with this responsibility have always suffered from feast or famine. On the day before a Pearl Harbor they have to stand hat in hand, pleading for more funds; on the day after they cannot spend the money quickly enough.

So far the United States has always survived

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such a policy. But there is plenty of evidence that the days are gone when we could afford the luxury of this approach to national defense.

At best, there seems no doubt that for many years to come we will have to live our lives poised on the brink of war. The aggressive practices of the Soviet, backed by possession of the atom bomb and the means of delivering it simultaneously to our major cities, mean that the US is going to have to abandon, once and for all, its habit of getting ready for war only when disaster actually strikes.

In the situation in which we find ourselves, the temptation to quick, easy and inexpensive solutions is sometimes almost overwhelming. It was of such sentiments that General Omar N. Bradley recently took note when he warned that cheap and easy answers to the problems we face are "will o' the wisps" and militarily unsound.

Painful as it is, for the national welfare a state of constant military readiness is today essential, both at home and among our allies abroad. With the world in its present condition, there is no sense in talking about defense expenditures as if they were luxuries which might be given up if we decided their cost was a little too burdensome.

What is at stake is more than convenience; it is survival as a free nation. And survival is going to cost money.

Epidemic in Korea

THERE is no doubt about the existence of a serious epidemic in Communist-controlled North Korea. Speculation as to the number of casualties remains precisely that, because officials of the International Red Cross have no access to the area. But there is sufficient evidence available to show that contagious disease is sweeping the country, and Communist leaders charge that the United States has been carrying on bacteriological warfare and is responsible for the epidemic.

The use of disease germs as weapons of war is a particularly repulsive idea, even in an age in which war can hardly be called refined. Certainly bacteriological warfare would constitute a most indiscriminate weapon, and almost inevitably the civilian casualties in such warfare would far surpass those of the military.

Happily, US officials seem as much repelled by the idea of initiating bacteriological warfare as the rank-and-file citizen. In the face of accusations by Chinese Communist leaders, faithfully echoed by the Russians, United States officials have forcefully and repeatedly denied such charges as completely unfounded. To give substance to the denials, they have proposed that International Red Cross officials be allowed inside North Korean territory to investigate the charges and make a public report.

To date, Communist officials have ignored this offer of impartial investigation while continuing to voice their original charges. As a result the general belief is that they made their charges in the first place only to camouflage their own inability to take effective action against typhus and bubonic plague inside their territory.

Now the United Nations has offered its aid in conquering the disease epidemic in North Korea. Through Trygve Lie the World Health Organization, which is the UN health arm, has offered its facilities and personnel to help check the further spread of disease and to alleviate the misery already caused. It is considered certain that the move had the prior support of General Ridgway, UN commander in Korea, and it was promptly seconded for the United States by Secretary of State Acheson.

Despite official support, considerable opposition to the move can be expected in this country. Feelings on the Korean war run high, and to many people this may look dangerously like building enemy strength for further attack on our own forces. With such a narrow interpretation of the United Nations proposal we cannot agree. Rather, we applaud the vision that prompted the generous offer. To us this latest move by the UN appears to be in the best tradition of Christian humanitarian conduct.

Even if one were able to leave aside all aspects of the matter but the immediately practical—something possible only for the sake of discussion—the UN offer is a master stroke of diplomacy for the cause of the West. In making it we have dramatized the fact that our war is with Communist totalitarianism, not with the stricken population of North Korea. To an Asia still somewhat dubious of our intentions we have provided a striking demonstration of the West at her best. We have painted in the boldest possible colors the contrast between Communist charges and the actions of the free nations.

We have not always enjoyed such prompt decision in the right direction. Often enough in the face of Communist challenges we have been slow and stumbling, and as a result we have too frequently allowed the Communists to seize the initiative from us. On this issue, UN leaders and US officials alike should be given credit for a far-sighted action which is worth more than a million Communist words.

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My Russian Friends

Memories of exiles in Manchuria — a people of amazing vitality and somewhat unstable emotions.

By JULIE BEDIER

I LOVE RUSSIANS. To me they are the funniest, the most charming, the most intellectually stimulating, the most exasperating of people, and the most lovable.

I lived in a city of Manchuria for years, and there, besides separate parish work for Chinese and Japanese, we had a little school. Most of the children were Russian exiles who had fled perilously across rivers and mountains from the Red armies after the Revolution. Their parents were people of much refinement and generally good education. I often visited their homes. Arriving in Manchuria and unable to get farther away from their persecutors, they had settled in Chinese houses and were scrabbling there for a living, having to compete with Chinese workmen who live on twenty cents a day.

As soon as we arrived at a Russian home the hospitable teapot and cakes would be set out. Crocheted lace doilies, embroidered cushions, all sorts of comfortable old-fashioned handiwork hid the bareness of the blue brick walls and cracked plaster. In one corner there was always a holy picture, about a foot square, in rich colors, hand-painted, set in carved and beaten metal. This was the Ikon (they pronounced it to rhyme with beacon) and they always seemed to have a light burning on the shelf before it.

Some families had managed to bring with them a few pictures, or perhaps a volume or two of the great Russian classics. These pitiful and loved relics would be brought out and shown me. Hands now gnarled with hard labor caressed them, and faces lined with worry and suffering grew brighter while the owners told in broken English about their beloved Russia, "Holy Russia," and the great universities where they had studied; and the still winter nights, and the gay parties, and the silent white groves of birch trees.

WHEN we first opened our school, we found we had a group of totally uninhibited children. They jumped in and out of the low open windows, climbed to the roof, fought bloody battles in the dusty yard of our cheap hired building until we got the situation in hand. After that, things were quieter, although the young bloods still remained Russians.

There was Volodia, who had a quarrel with some girls. They ganged up and taunted him. Volodia went off his rocker with rage; threw himself down, beat his head on the ground and literally bit the dust, screaming. Perhaps some innate gentlemanly instinct kept him from pitching into his tormentors.

Then there was Jania. Crippled by a tuberculous hip, he did not have very long to live. His parents were half-starved: his father, a musician, made what living he could, blowing a trumpet in Japanese movies and places of amusement. Having diseased lungs made every night of work agony to him. And Jania with his crippled hip insisted on playing football and all the other games. One recess time there was a great and joyful commotion. The boys had a rope, and all of them were tugging at it, pulling something over the ground at a dead run. When we were able to see through the dust clouds, we found that what they were pulling was a deliriously happy Jania, holding on to the rope with both hands, skidding along on his belly and whatever clothes were left on him.

There was Despina, whose father was some kind of count or baron. Now they lived in one Chinese room. Sometimes her father had work as a night watchman in the coalyards. Despina sang like a bird—indeed, all our Russians were musical. She was one of the many to whom we gave free tuition but we did expect the families to find money, somehow, to pay for their books, which we had to buy from the States. Despina asked me in a whisper if we could wait a little for the book money—"My father has no work." I tried to make her feel that it was all right—it was no disgrace to be poor, and in the case of Russian exiles poverty was a badge of courage. Some months later she came in proudly with five Japanese yen to pay on her bill.

"How did you get it?"

"My father got a job watching a ship in the docks."

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"How much did he make?"
"Ten yen."
"Has he any work now?"
"No, Sister."

It was all I could bear, but I took it and thanked her. That evening I had a session with our Superior, with the result that next day I was able to return the five yen to Despina, together with the receipted bill. I will not soon forget the look on that hungry child's face nor the gratitude of the family.

THE Russians made tremendous sacrifices to educate their children. Volodia's parents, for instance, lived in three small Chinese rooms in a suburb near the seashore. Every summer they moved into one room and rented the other two. Family meals were cooked and eaten in a lean-to in the garden. The money they made was just enough to pay for books and schooling for the two boys all year.

Their little garden was a blaze of red, blue, and yellow blossoms. Flowers and vegetables grew together in beautiful abandon and the boys' big dog Hector ran about with joyful barks whenever I called. The boys' mother and I were gardening cronies who exchanged information, seeds and cuttings. She showed me her prize pumpkin, carefully tied up in a net, growing on the fence. I taught her many English words and phrases. She introduced me to *The Brothers Karamazov* and to some works by Berdyaev. I loaned her Chesterton's *Everlasting Man* and his *Life of Thomas Aquinas*. We could talk of the differences in our religious beliefs without heat or rancor, for we respected each other's sincerity.

At one time I remarked to her that we Catholics were sure of the truths of our Faith; there was rock-bottom certainty. But I had the impression that Russians I talked to did not quite know whether or not they believed in their religion. Was I correct?

She considered the matter for several minutes, and then answered, a little sadly, "I believe most of us are not sure."

THE great Russian Mass on Easter must indeed be an occasion, with the glorious chant in which all the people join, and all the Oriental pageantry. The vestments are fuller even than our so-called Gothic chasubles, more like copes in shape. The Russian priests vested in these are something to see, with their long hair curling down to their shoulders and their flowing uncut beards. Whenever I met them they somehow reminded me of pictures of prophets or apostles, or even of Our Lord Himself. I envied the Russians their long-haired priesthood. There is something of dignity and nobility in a man's appearance that is lost when he is shaven and shorn, like Samson in his disgrace.

"Of course, priests could not go about like that in our modern civilization—they would be too conspicuous," it is said. Well, look at the weaker sex; in what wildly and magnificently fanciful costumes do our Sisters tread the streets of modern cities, as conspicuous as a moose at a teaparty, and as nonchalant as a mechanical gum dispenser.

The Russians make more of Easter than they do of Christmas. It is their custom to receive Holy Communion only at Easter; after this midnight Mass, they told me, there were great parties in all the houses; tables piled high with ham and eggs and roast lamb and the tall light loaves of Easter bread decorated with colored candies. Even the poorest somehow manages to prepare a banquet. All feast mightly after the long fasting and prayer, and greet one another with the Easter salutation in honor of Christ's resurrection, everybody kissing everyone else three times.

Now that the Orthodox Church is uprooted and dismembered in Russia, just where does that place the Russians, who argued so vehemently for Holy Russia, the Home of the Church? My experience has been that the exiles hold on all the more fiercely to what is left, the scattered fragments of their Faith. Their tiny church on a Manchurian hillside did not begin to hold all the faithful who congregated there for the great feasts; yet they came, and stood, and sang, crowding all around the priest and kissing the holy ikons on the walls. However, they have ideas that seem queer indeed to us, with our stricter discipline and our definite church law.

One woman whose two boys were in my class told me that her Dmitri and Vladimir thought seriously of their Easter confession, and were always deeply disturbed because the priest, busy with many confessions in a short time, took the youngsters in groups. He habitually called the two brothers in together, and one Easter took one of their friends, too, making three at confession, together.

"I told them," she said, "this Easter, don't stay together in line. Stay far apart. If he doesn't see you together, he won't call you in together."

The boys did that; they separated and lost themselves in the line of penitents. But it was no

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use. When Dmitri's turn came, the priest looked out along the line, spied Vladimir at the far end, and beckoned to him.

"You, Vladimir, you come in, too."

Poor boys! I have no idea whether Russian priests elsewhere did the like; I only know what my Russians told me in that one city. Moreover, it seemed the Orthodox Church allowed divorce under certain circumstances. And the general attitude toward marriage seemed to be that most failings could be excused.

One account, I remember, of a young Ludmila who was entangled in an affair with a married man.

"But it was all right, Sister, because they luffed. And his wife, she drank."

The man finally abandoned his Ludmila. Ludmila, I was told, lighted the lamps before the ikon in the corner of her room, and set a couch beneath the holy picture. She spread the couch with white sheets and lace-edged pillow cases. She robed herself all in white, lay down on the couch, and took poison.

"Was it not beautiful, Sister?"

SO much for the strange confusions of my dear Russians. What can you do but love such people?

Now they are scattered from the Philippines to the African Gold Coast. Some lucky ones got out to America, working their way on freight boats. They finished their education at American colleges, washing dishes in restaurants at night and attending classes in the daytime. I do not know when they got their sleep. And they took out their first papers almost the day they arrived. Some who were not able to get out before the Reds took Manchuria met death or misfortune gallantly, I am sure. They are a brave lot, gay and spendthrift, a bit improvident, impetuous, lovable.

There is today a danger among Americans that prejudices and hatreds may grow up against the Russian people. We may come to identify them with "Moscow" and the Red tyranny, to magnify their faults, forget their virtues. There is no basis for such anti-Russian sentiment.

We miss much when we erect a wall of prejudice between us and any group of men; of Russians perhaps more than many others. In order to know a people simply as they are, somewhat in the way God looks upon them, the best way is to know their children.

FROM JAPAN

The Impact of American Occupation

NEWLY-ARRIVED visitors in Japan are impressed daily with Western influence. Much of this influence is American; and a superficial glance will satisfy the casual observer that what comes from the United States is likely to be widely emulated.

Yet there is abundant evidence that the majority of the population has a seriously distorted idea of what constitutes American culture. We have heard from intelligent, highly-educated Japanese such ideas as these: (1) the climate of Southern California is typical of the entire United States, (2) Negroes are still slaves in America, (3) romantic love is the only criterion for selecting a partner in marriage, and that lack of it is a recognized legal ground for divorce, (4) all American women smoke, (5) it is unheard of for Americans to have more than two children, (6) American students need not give any thought to the economic system, since they are all enthusiastic supporters of nineteenth-century laissez-faire capitalism, (7) rice is never eaten in America, and all Americans eat large quantities of bread at every meal instead.

Americans in Japan, ambassadors of their own way of living, have not often been well grounded in understanding differences between cultures. In their ignorance, they have expected to be emulated, not knowing that many things they do — eating a balanced meal or correcting their children's manners, for example — are misunderstood or disliked by the Japanese. Americans often mistakenly assume that Japanese would really *prefer* to have their children's noses wiped, not knowing runny noses are considered normal for nine months of the year and that people who hand out paper tissues are considered eccentric, boorish, or worse.

An American soldier was telling us of his long experience in Japan and described a jeep accident in which a child was killed. "And do you know," he climaxed his story, "his mother just looked at him. Didn't cry or anything. They got so many children they just don't care!" It had never occurred to him that it is Japanese custom never to show emotion in public, whatever the circumstance.

PERHAPS the first thing which strikes the visitor is the extent to which the personal appearance of the average Japanese has been Westernized. American coiffures are all the vogue. Permanent waves are so much in demand that the number of beauty parlors is constantly increasing. Even in small towns almost all young women have Western haircuts, especially the shoulder-length bob. Western-type cosmetics have found a lucrative market;

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and the female figure seeks the American ideal of curves and slender lines where they should be, employing artificial aids whenever necessary. Models and movie actresses are generally among the most Western-appearing women of the population.

Other than among the old, the practice of wearing foreign style clothes—*yofuku*—among Japanese women has become so nationwide that younger people who wear the *kimono* for every-day purposes have practically disappeared. A number of middle-aged housewives and even more of the older women wear long, loose one-piece dresses for their workaday life in summer — a compromise with the western-style *yofuku*. Today the traditional national costume, the *kimono*, is usually reserved by young women for special occasions. And although western-style clothes for men have long been common, they are now almost universal. The trend today has pulled away from the more extreme immediate postwar pattern of wide padded shoulders, loud neckties and incongruous motifs; more conservative lines and colors are now in vogue. American residents sometimes criticize the fit and style of Western clothes worn by the Japanese, but they are here to stay.

Since the Occupation introduced dance halls and night clubs and "salons," American swing and jazz music dominate such places and almost monopolize radio musical programs. However, the loud, blaring selections of a few years ago have given way to more conservative songs and rhythms, with the tango and rumba gaining wider popularity. A growing number of people are coming to appreciate classical Western music, and there is a widespread demand for concert appearances of outstanding musicians and artists from abroad. Western ballroom dancing is fairly common now; but an even more widely known and appreciated contribution Americans have made to Japanese culture is square dancing, which has spread all over the country.

Foreign movies dominate the scene, being almost unanimously hailed as of better quality; but the Japanese film industry received a shot in the arm with the world acclaim of "Rashomon" (although it was not a success artistically or financially in Japan). Japanese pictures are being produced and attended in increasing numbers, and are becoming more Western in makeup. Prewar and wartime pictures banned practically all romantic gestures, particularly the passionate kiss; but today Japanese films, and their advertisements, match and in some cases outdo Stateside movies in such demonstrations.

Some customs long connected with Japanese life have either given way or undergone a change. The geisha girl, one of the most widely publicized aspects of Nipponese culture, is in this category. Long respected and considered as functioning in a respectable entertainment profession, she finds her position threatened by competition from the postwar lady of light morals, the *pan-pan*, who solicits trade on the street. Consequently the geisha engages more freely in activities which were formerly the sphere of the traditional brothel or *joro* house.

The position of women has been changing considerably. The postwar Japanese girl seems to be fully convinced that young women, whether married or not, should have some definite training upon which they can rely whenever called upon to earn a living. They understand fully the disadvantages of mothers and wives of yesteryear, who were not permitted to work and were kept helpless and completely dependent upon fathers, husbands and sons.

SOME of the most striking changes in Japanese culture today lie in the field of social relations. Today the younger generation can be seen in the cities mixing more casually, walking along together and chatting and even dining and dancing in Western fashion. Smoking by women is no longer a novelty. Likewise, such demonstrations of affection as hugging and kissing, which were not indulged in freely, (and still aren't in the countryside) even among married couples, are being adopted gradually, especially by the younger generation.

Changes have come, too, in the diet of the people. Rice has remained the principal staple food of the Japanese, but since the war years a shortage of rice has necessitated an adjustment to using more noodles and bread. The school lunch program has accustomed children to drinking milk and eating bread; and a less rigid diet for the entire population may eventually be possible.

The Occupation helped to improve health standards and cut down the disease rate. Improved medical educational and the application of approved public health methods have resulted in a marked reduction in the mortality rate. Despite these advances, hospital administrations have failed to maintain modern standards of sanitation and the continued observance of traditional and outdated practices continues to be a major factor. It is still common for hospital wards, kitchens, lavatories, and even operating rooms to be improperly cleaned and unsanitary. Moreover, much remains to be done in educating the population to better diet, habits and sanitation.

There is a continual tug-of-war going on over educational policies revised by the Occupation. Many conservatives protest the change from six years of compulsory schooling to nine. The introduction of coeducation is not yet approved unanimously, having brought with it problems unknown when there was rigid separation in all schools and Japanese young people were completely unaccustomed to being together until marriage. Schools on the lower levels still practice a measure of sex segregation by seating boys and girls apart in the classroom.

DESPITE so many changes, there is now discernible a trend towards a returning to things Japanese. The people have stopped to reexamine Japanese culture and are beginning to revive those things which they consider good and worthwhile and which, they feel, helped to enrich the lives of their forebears. This expected reaction against the wave of Americanization, which swept the country beginning in 1945, was to be expected. History shows a Japanese tendency to go "all out" in a new direction; then after almost blindly and unquestioningly pursuing the new and the novel to a certain distance, they begin to doubt. This

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is when they look back to the past before finally committing themselves to the newer ways.

This is what is going on today in Japanese culture. People have become more discerning in their selection of reading matter. Book dealers report that popular books are no longer erotic, and sensational literature that used to crowd the bookstalls just after the war is giving way to reading matter that is more substantial and educational. There is now a revival of interest in Japanese classics; newspapers, magazines, and books are filled with historical tales. And the revival of interest is not confined to reading; it extends to art, music, and the drama.

This trend towards the past is showing itself, too, in other areas. The present Government is now preparing bills to submit to the Diet to abolish Daylight Saving Time, measures to wipe out reforms introduced by the Occupation limiting the number of *kanji* (Chinese ideographs) in the Japanese language, and possibly *taimen kotsu,* an Occupation-sponsored regulation requiring pedestrians to walk on the right side of a roadway facing oncoming traffic.

Most of this cultural push-and-pull is taking place in the urban areas. Life in the rural districts (and half of the population lives in the countryside) is much as it has always been. The women continue in their traditionally subordinate status with few and minor modifications. The farmers go early to the rice fields and with their womenfolk beside them toil until long after dark, using the most primitive sort of equipment. Modern conveniences are virtually unknown; the homes are much as they have been for centuries — *Daikan* houses with tatami (a type of straw floor), thatched roofs, earth floors in the kitchens, well water, and a *shichirin* (crude charcoal pot) on which to cook meals. When parents find a prospective son-in-law, they may marry off their daughter without her consent. The oxen (the only farm work animals with the exception of a few horses) continue almost as members of the family, sharing an abode joining that of the family.

But even in the country, the new ways are making small inroads. Young people visit the cities and towns or go there to work or school. The newspapers and magazines bring reports of new things and new ways. Slowly the cultural frontier is pushed back.

At present, changes are not always consistent, wise, or logical. Much bad is adopted along with the good; much good is discarded with the bad. But through the process runs a thread of thinking that each new cultural import belongs in some way to democracy, and that Japan is trying to "catch up."

The new tendency on the part of Japanese to reexamine Western ways suggests a reexamination of democracy itself. Serious criticism of this kind is needed. If Japan imports those aspects of American culture which are most valuable — if she learns something of the spirit of citizenship and social responsibility in a democracy — it will not matter much what she does about Western clothes.

HUGH H. and MABEL M. SMYTHE

Mr. and Mrs. Smythe are members of the faculty of Yamaguchi National University.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

The Catholic Worker and the Workers

DOROTHY DAY'S excellent new book, *The Long Loneliness,* gives us another chance to pay her tribute. She is the mother of most of us who today, as lay people, are involved in the Catholic Social Action movement. She has called some of us "wayward sons" and some of us have called her a wayward mother, and other things. But the first duty of man is to give thanks, and the first thanks should be given to the woman who introduced so many of us to the life of Catholic social action.

Among some of those who started with the Catholic Worker and then grew away from it, there is a tendency to disparage the movement even in retrospect. Words like "crackpot" and "screwball" drift into the conversation. Dorothy herself refers to some in the movement as "the lunatic fringe." And there have been plenty in the American Church who were only too ready to dismiss Dorothy and all her cohorts in exactly those terms.

Nothing could be more foolish, more truly lunatic. From a strictly rational, orthodox point of view there have certainly been lapses. Maybe her heart was stronger than her head. But strong heads have always been a dime a dozen in the Catholic Church. Priests who spend so many years in study and keep themselves unentangled and unconfused by matrimony find it easier to have strong heads.

But back in 1933, when the safe little world we knew was collapsing and the unemployed were swarming through the streets by the millions, it was strong hearts that were needed. It did not take a strong head to tell us what should be done. We had all heard about "Love thy neighbor," and "I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat." We needed hearts strong enough to make a start at feeding people, strong enough to make a start at teaching people their duties toward the broken bodies of their fellowmen.

THIS is the matter-of-fact way Dorothy Day described her own magnificent achievement in the first issue of the paper, in May, 1933: "This first number of the *Catholic Worker* was planned, written and edited in the kitchen of a tenement on Fifteenth Street, on subway platforms, on the El, the ferry. There is no editorial office, no overhead in the way of telephone or electricity; no salaries paid.

"The money for the printing of the first issue was raised by begging small contributions from friends. A colored priest in Newark sent us ten dollars and the prayers of his congregation. A colored sister in New Jersey sent us a dollar. Another kindly and generous friend sent twenty-

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five. The rest of it the editors squeezed out of their own earnings, and at that they were using money necessary to pay milk bills, gas bills, electric light bills.

"Next month someone may donate us an office. Who knows?"

And so they were off. It is interesting to speculate on the direction the movement would have taken if it had not been for Peter Maurin. The big contribution of Peter Maurin was that he got Dorothy Day started. He had great gifts and a disarming simplicity. But after the start, it seems to me, his influence led Dorothy deeper and deeper into the waters of contradiction and confusion.

The first issue of the *Catholic Worker* started off waving the banner of the encyclicals. Dorothy summed up the purpose of the paper on the editorial page: "In an attempt to popularize and make known the encyclicals of the Popes in regard to social justice and the program put forth by the Church for the 'reconstruction of the social order,' this news sheet, the *Catholic Worker,* is started." (This quote and others used herein are not in *The Long Loneliness,* but from early issues of the paper.)

Peter himself used to speak sometimes of "making the encyclicks click." But how alien his thought was to the whole meaning of the Popes became clear early in the game. In Vol. I, No. 8, he answered a reader's appeal for support for organization of labor unions as follows:

> "Most organizations exist
> not for the benefit
> of the organized,
> but for the benefit
> of the organizers.
>
> "When the organizers try to
> organize the unorganized,
> they do not organize themselves.
> If everybody organized himself,
> everybody would be organized."

"Strikes don't strike me" was another of his favorite sayings. Before the first year was out (April, 1934), Dorothy was trying rather desperately to reconcile Peter with the Popes. She wrote: "People come to the worker's school [at the C.W.] and hear much talk about the encyclical, *Forty Years After*—about the NRA and how far it goes to approach the Pope's idea, about international peace and international associations of workingmen and industrialists.

"And then when they have heard all this from the lips of priest, professor and laymen, Peter Maurin rises up with the voice of one crying in the wilderness and says,

" 'The great danger of the present day is Fascism and the tendency of all organization is to lead to Fascism.'

" 'What about the Pope and *Quadragesimo Anno*?' our listeners proclaim. And Peter continues his warning: 'Fascism! Beware of state regulation because it leads to Fascism.' "

And here is how Dorothy reconciles this conflict: "Peter's message is that *Forty Years After* does not hold up the ideal of personal responsibility voiced by the encyclical on St. Francis of Assisi. It is as though a sad and weary father said to his children who warred continually on one another:

" 'Very well—you will not follow the ideal for the sake of Christ. I will present to you then still another program of action — organization — the organization of some so that others may be coerced thereby. You will not voluntarily reform, so pressure must be brought to bear.' " This picture of the Pope trimming his doctrine to fit his balky children is pretty sad, pretty naive. It demonstrates to what lengths Dorothy would go in those days to reconcile the irreconcilable: Peter's rustic anarchism and the great common sense of the Vicar of Christ.

QUOTATIONS from Eric Gill began to appear with more frequency in the paper, usually submitted and arranged by Peter. The machine and most of its works became anathema. Said Gill (May, 1934): "Is Catholicism compatible with the industrial development of society? The answer is certainly: No. For at the root of Catholicism is the doctrine of individual responsibility . . . That state in which human responsibility is denied or diminished is a state in which Catholicism cannot flourish. In an industrial state, man, working men, the majority are only fully responsible when they are not working. In such a state Catholicism returns to the catacombs." Of course when Gill himself wanted to use a typewriter, this was okay. Similar inconsistencies were legion at the C.W.

Note in the above passage how Gill confuses moral responsibility with artistic, or productive, responsibility. It was on such confusions that the whole anti-machine edifice was built.

In the early days of the *Catholic Worker,* however, there was room for everybody, including the trade unionists. There had to be. There was nowhere else for anyone to go. And Dorothy could not turn her back entirely on the trade union movement. She had received her early training from the Socialists and Communists, and the call of the union hall and the picket line were still too strong for her to deny them entirely.

And then the CIO started its big organizing drives. There were the sit-down strikes for Dorothy to cover in her own brilliant fashion, climbing through the windows of the GM plant in Flint. Later she wrote to John Brophy, director of organization of the CIO, and appealed to him as a Catholic "to preach in season and out of season the use of pure means. And by that we mean non-violent coercion, a Gandhi technique which does not resort to the use of force."

But at Flint her big heart led her to defend the strikers. She described the "home-made clubs, boxes of hinges and bolts ready to be used as missiles." And she adds: "These were their arms, and their preparations seemed pitifully inadequate to me in view of the machine guns and riot guns of the militia and the guards of the companies."

When she talked to Marty Wersing, president of the little union in the Edison system in New York, she could be very sympathetic to the idea of an organization of Catholic trade unionists who would help to educate the

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Catholic workers and take the play away from the Communists and business unionists.

In October, 1936, after talking to Wersing she wrote in the paper: "A few strong and ardent Catholic men can save the trade union movement in this country. Join your union and see that it is a workers' union and not a company union. Work for it. Study the history of the labor movement, not only here in America, but all over the world."

In *The Long Loneliness* she describes the founding of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists by Wersing and a few others at the Catholic Worker in February, 1937, just a little more than fifteen years ago.

"Their aim and endeavor was to assist the worker to organize and to enlighten the Catholic in the existing unions as to the teachings of the Popes in regard to labor. They set out at once to oppose the Communist and gangster elements (two separate problems) in the longshoreman and other unions, and their policy came into conflict with ours.

"As Peter pointed out, ours was a long-range program, looking for ownership by the workers of the means of production, the abolition of the assembly line, decentralized factories, the restoration of crafts and ownership of property. This meant, of course, an accent on the agrarian and rural aspects of our economy and a changing of emphasis from the city to the land.

"The immediate job at hand was enough for the Association. They disagreed with our indiscriminate help in strikes where there was strong Communist influence, and our loss of the opportunity to get our men into positions of vantage in order to influence others.

"Peter, however, talked about Christ's technique, of working from the bottom and with the few, of self-discipline and self-organization, of sacrifice rather than enlightened self-interest, and of course, of the synthesis of cult, culture and cultivation."

THIS is a curious combination of fairness and unfairness. As though the ACTU were opposed to nine-tenths of the things she mentions as the C.W. program! These things were the ACTU program, too, and though the ACTU believed, and still believes, in first things first, still there was never a time when its leaders did not acknowledge the necessity of a long-range program. It never advocated the abolition of the assembly line, though there were admissions that when a good deal more evidence was in, it might be necessary to modify or even abolish the line to reconcile mass production with the demands of human personality.

Crafts no, ownership of property, decentralized factories, yes. Self-discipline, Christ's technique, from the bottom up, by all means. The ACTU, or some of its members, have sometimes been guilty of an overly-political approach to trade union conflicts, or "getting our own men into positions of vantage." But this is not an easy problem. This could be said: the C.W. did a wonderful job with its soup kitchen in the seamen's strike of 1936. But when the strike was over the C.W. folded up its soup kitchen and moved back to Mott Street, leaving the seamen to the Communists. Dorothy can describe this, with an obvious dig at the ACTU: "there were no maneuverings, no caucuses, no seeking of influence or power; it was simply a gesture of help, the disinterested help of brothers." And it was. It was fine. But afterwards what was the decent seaman to do, where was he to go? The ACTU at least gave him an organization to guide and sustain him, labor schools to instruct him, and a newspaper that admitted that he had an honorable function to perform, that all the goodness of life was not to be found on a C.W. farm.

When the National Maritime Union came down to its great crisis of 1947-48, when it finally threw off the Communist yoke, there was no guidance forthcoming from the C.W. It had long since lost touch with the problems of the rank-and-file seamen. But the ACTU was there and had delegates on the floor of the convention to help the movement. Maneuvering? Seeking of power? Or another form of the works of mercy, which, Dorothy never forgets to point out, include the business of instructing the ignorant and counseling the doubtful.

DOROTHY DAY and the *Catholic Worker* have taught us magnificent lessons about these same works of mercy, about the love and importance of poverty, about the primacy of the spiritual, about the power of faith. These things we should remember as long as we have the power to remember. These things we should cling to and imitate.

But we have no obligation to imitate the theoretical confusions of the movement, the sloppy thinking, the silly posturing as more-radical-than-thou, etc. Above all, we have no obligation to admire the teachings of Robert Ludlow, one of the present editors, who dismisses labor-management cooperation as "a betrayal of the workers."

Dorothy Day is a great woman and the mother of us all. Perhaps her head is not as strong as her heart. But "the weak things of the world has God chosen to put to shame the strong." And it could be that God goes on choosing Dorothy Day.

JOHN C. CORT.

An Appeal

SISTER Pia Langhammer is in this country on behalf of her Marienheim of Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria. This is a home for girls which was confiscated by the Germans in 1939. Its exterior appearance is good, but the interior is in a sad state of disrepair. Beds and cots have rusted; mattresses have become thinner; the walls have peeled. Eight girls are quartered in every room. The $12.50 a month charged for room and board scarcely pays for their food.

Sister Pia wants to restore the self-respect of these homeless girls, the majority of whom are very poor, by providing decent living quarters. The major repairs needed will cost several thousand dollars. Sister Pia's American address is c/o Rast, 120 East 34th Street (Apartment 1-E) New York 16, N. Y.

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The Stage

Flight into Egypt

GEORGE TABORI's first play has for its principal character a voluntary expatriate who never finds the new life he is looking for. It is pretty much Mr. Tabori's point—if I understand him correctly—that there is no such life, that the future for any man lies in accepting his roots and dealing with the circumstances which immediately surround him. To make his point, the author puts his runaway hero through the tortures of the damned: he condemns him to an eternity of waiting, in a shabby Egyptian hotel, for an American visa; he forces him to watch his twelve-year-old son run wild in the land of the dispossessed, and to watch his wife, distraught from the financial pressures which are thrust upon them, surrender herself to a native doctor in exchange for much-needed medicines; he chains the man to a wheelchair through all of this, and then lets him know that he is suffering from a progressive, incurable paralysis; and at the end he has him kill himself.

The trouble with Mr. Tabori's play is that some of the suffering is gratuitous, and nearly all of it irrelevant. Very few of the things that happen to Franz Engel happen because he has attempted to transplant himself. The illness is something he has acquired in the service of his native Austria; the economic misfortunes are of the kind which happen everywhere. The theme of the play is stated in the dialogue, but not acted out in the incidents, and the net result is a play which seems more cruel than meaningful.

This is unfortunate for a number of reasons: Tabori has obvious talent, and he never writes cheaply; Elia Kazan has staged the play with the urgent unsentimental vitality which is his trademark; and Paul Lukas and Gusti Huber, as the refugee husband and wife, give performances of exhausting intensity. The production is distinguished by its moment-to-moment honesty, and it is too bad that all this dedicated, and sometimes dynamic, work should add up to so little that is gratifying. The anguish is stretched and strained to too little clear purpose; the telling small details which tumble over one another never merge into a compelling whole.

Jo Mielziner's hotel background is suitably oppressive, and there are especially fine minor performances from Voytek Dolinski, John Rodney, Paul Mann, Don Keefer, and Joseph Anthony. (*At the Music Box*)

The Long Watch

IT SEEMS that girls are a giddy lot wherever they are, and even when they have been inducted into the Waves, disciplined by stern officers, and put to the vital business of conducting radio operations on which seagoing lives depend, they still cannot quite be brought to take their responsibilities seriously. The particular girls who populate Harvey Haislip's play get into a great pet when they are deprived of their mascot turtles, find it fine sport to revenge themselves by snitching their commanding officer's codebook, frolic tomboy fashion in and out of their bunk beds, fall in love at the drop of a salute, sneak out of quarters to visit their men, and nod away next morning over their transmitters while half the Navy drowns.

I am reliably informed—by a bachelor acquaintance—that all of this constitutes a libel on the sex. But Harvey Haislip was himself an officer in the Navy. He was there. He knows.

What he does not know, I am sorry to say, is how to write a play, and "The Long Watch" emerges as one of the oddest tributes to a wartime contingent we have yet had. The first half of the evening is pure undergraduate romp, the second half straight grade-B Hollywood. Both halves are clumsy in construction, labored in humor, and dog-eared in characterization.

Walter Abel and Sonia Sorel, as Captain and Lieutenant of an Air-Sea Rescue base, pitch into the nonsense with enormous confidence, and go down with it. Christine White shows more restraint as a Wave who inadvertently sends her own husband to his death, and thereby fares a good bit better. And Anne Meacham and Patricia Englund seemed like reasonable people who would accept better employment if they could get it. (*At the Lyceum*)

WALTER KERR.

The Screen

How's the World Treating You?

ALTHOUGH it was admitted that Donald Powell Wilson juggled the facts a bit in his account of life as a prison psychologist, the movie *"My Six Convicts"* which was made from the book will hold your interest from beginning to end. Perhaps it's a little slick at times and Director Hugo Fregonese occasionally got too sentimental, but he knows how to depict character and to build up suspense.

The problem itself in "My Six Convicts" is absorbing, and Producer Stanley Kramer has set and cast it effectively. "Doc" Wilson (John Beal) comes to the State Harbor Prison in the early Thirties as an experiment. For a three-year period, he is to give psychological and aptitude tests to convicts to determine their character, capacity and skills. He soon realizes that life in prison is a war between the ins and the outs and that he is on trial with the prisoners, most of whom refuse to believe that his findings will be held in strict confidence, and some of whom don't even know the difference between a psychologist and a stool pigeon.

As I watched this film I suffered every step of the way with "Doc" who had some hardened characters to contend with. Fortunately he was helped by the six convicts who became his assistants: a safe-cracker (Millard Mitchell) who was interested in learning how his own head worked; a gangster (Gilbert Roland) who was also a killer with grandiose ideas; an alcoholic (Marshall Thompson) who had a high I.Q. and never should have been sentenced to this prison; an embezzler (Jay Adler)

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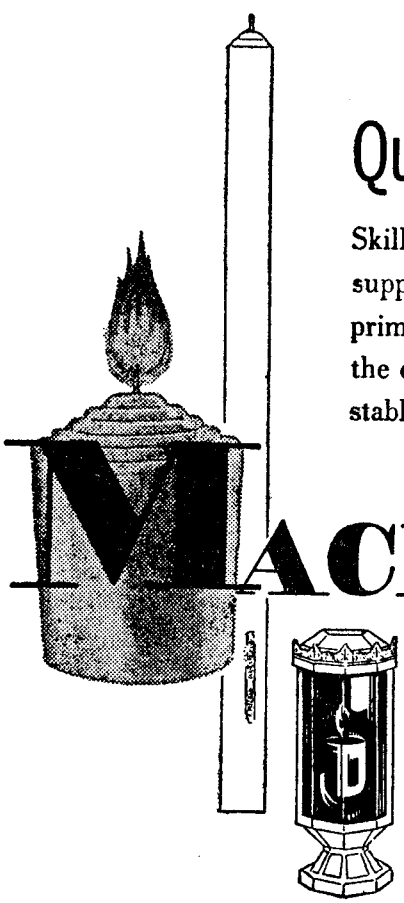
a gentle ex-bookkeeper who later turns out to be one of Wilson's failures when he is released from prison but returns because he cannot cope with the outside world; a quiet young man (Alf Kjellin) sentenced for an unarmed hold-up; and a psychopathic killer (Henry Morgan) who later leads a prison break. There are many more in the good cast, but these seven play the leads — sometimes realistically, sometimes in a contrived manner, but never dully.

Each episode in Michael Blankfort's well-written script carries a wallop — with occasional flashes of humor that keep the events from appearing too grim. The scenes in which Wilson quells a riot by addressing all the prisoners at one time in their cells and later when he is used as a shield during a prison break ("You're a good man, Doc, but you should have stayed at home") almost explode with suspense. For a change of pace, the episode in which the safe cracker is used to open a jammed vault in a near-by town is done as a flashback told by Mitchell; and the sequence in which the young hold-up man's wife is smuggled into prison is done without dialogue in good old-fashioned silent-screen technique. It is in the humorous aftermath of this amazing event that Doc proves psychologists don't know everything about human behavior.

As time goes on, Wilson becomes more and more successful in his work; and both the administration and prisoners hold him in high esteem. The various uses of psychology in tests, experiments and treatments are fascinating to watch. In fact all of "My Six Convicts" is so engrossing that one almost overlooks its sentimental touches. Most sentimental is the finale which takes place at the end of the three years when the new psychologist arrives to carry on with the rehabilitation system started so well by Wilson. The farewells between those of the six who are still there and the Doctor are a little blubbery. But as Wilson leaves he recalls the protective attitude that these men took toward him; and he adds that this attitude continued through the years as the men inquired from time to time: "Are they treating you O.K., Doc?" His reply is our reply: "Fine, my friends, but how is the world treating you? All of you?"

PERHAPS some of this warmth would not have been amiss in *"The Young and the Damned,"* the Luis Bunuel production which was made in Mexico under the title of "Los Olvidados" and has now been released with English subtitles. No doubt as an example of pure cinema, or as a documentary tract showing the extent of juvenile delinquency in Mexico, "The Young and the Damned" is more serious and provocative than "My Six Convicts." But in spite of Bunuel's extraordinary direction, his picture errs in going overboard in its all-inclusive realism just as so many Hollywood movies give a false impression by seeing their American dreams through rose-colored glasses washed in soap-opera suds. Director Bunuel says of his screenplay, which he wrote with Luis Alcoriza: "There is nothing imagined in this film. It is all merely true."

True it may be, but Bunuel forgets that even truth



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when presented on stage or screen has to be edited or relieved occasionally if the audience is to stay with it to the bitter end. In portraying juvenile delinquency in and around Mexico City, "The Young and the Damned" paints a picture of black depression and misery. The adolescent gang, whose infamous exploits we follow in explicit detail, lie, steal, beat up a blind man and legless cripple; and one of them, their leader who is obviously physically as well as mentally sick, commits a couple of murders. He is portrayed without any redeeming qualities whatsoever.

One ray of light shines through all this gloom when Pedro, who so badly needs his mother's love (this is expertly portrayed in a dream sequence) and admits that he wants to be good but doesn't know how, is sent to a detention home on a state farm. The farm director understands Pedro, but even his kindness comes to naught when Pedro is sent on an errand and is robbed by the leader of the adolescent gang.

Since Luis Bunuel was able to portray poverty in Mexico so well and since the point is well made that parents and not the children are usually the real delinquents, it is unfortunate that he did not temper his film for general audiences. He might have shown us more of the good being done on the state farm and less of sadistic violence. "The Young and the Damned," which is expertly acted and directed, could have been an outstanding film instead of just a one-sided study in despair and evil of interest only to social workers.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Communications

"A Catholic Speaks His Mind"

New York, N. Y.

TO THE Editors: When I came back to the Peter Maurin Farm at Pleasant Plains, after speaking on the same platform with secularist liberals and Communists at Carnegie Hall a few weeks ago, I went to our little chapel which is quiet and bright and warm with the presence of all good, of love unutterable. I felt suddenly happy.

Life was a succession of struggles, a grim battle often, a venturing out on a dangerous front, and then a quiet retreat to gather together one's forces in silence, in suffering and prayer. Probably what I had done would be censured by many. And indeed if I had made a mistake, God would have to take care of it.

I had been thinking of the Holy Father's February 11th message; "We must do everything, everything, for peace." "Of what value would be disputations on justice, on charity, on peace, if the will were already resolved, if the heart were determined to remain in icy solitude and if none were to dare to be the first to break through the barrier of dividing hate to hasten to offer a sincere embrace?"

What gestures we must make these days! Yes, God would have to repair our mistakes. He would have to take care of it. "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

Thomas Sugrue felt that way when he finished his book, *A Catholic Speaks His Mind on America's Religious Conflict*. Catholic editors and writers feel affronted that a good part of the book appeared in the *Christian Herald*, a Protestant publication. They felt that a Blanshard was quite articulate enough without a "cradle Catholic" joining in the criticism of the Church. It seems to me it was that more than anything else which caused the outcry.

But the book must be judged on its intention — and that is the intense desire of the author to reach out to others, to try to find some basis for unity. There is an intense hunger in the heart of Thomas Sugrue for unity and this desire is an expression of the love he has for the great body of Protestant Christians in this country. I have this yearning towards Communists, and I recognize this spirit when I see it in others.

What if he does criticize Catholics? Aren't we all taught in the spiritual life to take criticism, deserved and undeserved? "This then is perfect joy!" Saint Francis said. And Saint Peter said the same. We are to take it and humbly say we deserve far more. Indeed when it comes down to it, Sugrue's criticism is bitter and strong and too concentrated, too much along one line. But we could all add our bit to it.

I could complain of the attitude of churchmen or rather the lack of any stand taken against great social sins. We have had a Father Dunne come out on the Short case (remember the story in THE COMMONWEAL?), we have had individuals weeping with those who weep, crying out for justice, but where is the public excoriation of sin, the denouncings of lynchings, legal lynchings and those by mobs, the burning of Negroes and their homes, the looting of the poor by corrupt civil servants and the defrauding of the laborer of his hire — sins crying to heaven for vengeance?

There are too many Communion breakfasts (Sugrue mentions them) where politicians and exploiters of labor sit side by side, cheek by jowl with the clergy, and we could, all of us, name names and places. No, the Church is expected these days to be a bulwark of the status quo and is honored as such, and enjoys a false peace as such.

"The church is as uneasy in a concordat as she is in the catacombs," it has been said. The trouble with Sugrue's book is that it does not go far enough. As a convert with a Protestant background I was always conscious of the iron curtain between Catholics and Protestants. Sugrue felt it most keenly in New England. He knew the Catholics were looked down upon by Protestants, who were in turn scorned by the Catholics. He didn't like that scorn he saw. When he wondered why Catholics were not liked, he looked around and found plenty of reason why, in the political Catholicism of our great cities, in the attempt, at whatever cost, to be as good as the next one. He beats his breast over the political and business practices of well known Catholics. *Mea culpa, mea culpa!*

HOW to get together with our Protestant brothers? It has been said many times that there can be no peace while Christians are so hostile, so divided. Mr.

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Sugrue does not seem to know much about the ecumenical movements in Europe and this country. He is familiar with Karl Adam's book, *One and Holy* and quotes from it. He comes to many of the same conclusions.

But he does not know Father Danielou and his *Salvation of the Nations* and *Advent,* and I hope he gets them and enjoys them. I hope, too, that he gets acquainted with Fathers Yves de Montcheuil, the Jesuit, and Yves Congar, the Dominican. *Men of Action,* by the first named, has recently been published by Fides Press and "Attitudes Towards Reform in the Church," part of a book by the latter, has appeared in the fourth number of *Cross Currents.*

Many of the things Sugrue has said have been said before. Father de Menasce, French Dominican, spoke at the Third Hour meeting last month (the Third Hour is another ecumenical group not known to Sugrue) and said that through the mystics of every faith, the Sufi of the Mohammedans, the guru of the Buddhists, the prophets of Israel and the saints of the Protestant and Catholic and Eastern Churches we could meet on a common ground in a stretching out of the soul to God, as the author of *The Cloud of the Unknowing* said. "Look that nothing live in thy waking mind but a naked intent stretching unto God." "Mean only God." "Press upon Him with longing love."

We can meet too, he says, on the ground of social justice, the common good. Does he know of Saul Alinksy's back-of-the-yards movement in Chicago where Bishop Sheil too has tried to find common ground with non-Catholics?

This is far from saying, "One religion is as good as another." Thomas Sugrue himself does not believe this. He writes of his discovery of Saints John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila, and others. "They are the heart of Catholicism; they are its mystical core; after I had found them and studied them I would not have left the Church under any persuasion." And later, "I consider, when I think of Simone Weil, that I was fortunate to be born inside the gate, and that I was lucky in having the sense to take myself inward toward the center in my flight from the noise of the markets, instead of fleeing outward through the gate."

Mr. Sugrue makes it plain that he is a practicing Catholic, and when he speaks as he did recently at the New School for Social Research and at the Community Church, he has appeared to voice this longing of his heart to reach his brothers. My friend Sally Schiltius heard him at the New School and said she was stirred by his message of love and only reinforced in her faith. Tom Sullivan and Charlie McCormick heard him at the Community Church and said that in the question period, when prejudices were aired and misunderstandings were brought out into the open, Sugrue could only be considered in the light of defender of the faith.

Reaching as he does, through his books and lectures, so many who know little of our faith, we are hoping that he will deepen and enrich his own knowledge of it to further his missionary work with a more positive approach to unity.

DOROTHY DAY.

WILLINGLY to SCHOOL

by Dom Hubert van Zeller

The boys at Downside in the author's time were as pleasantly nutty a collection as we ever heard of. The monks, apparently, could take any amount of extraordinary goings-on in their stride, and if the lay masters were not always as happy, at least the author's pictures of them have brought them nearer to immortality than they were likely to get otherwise. (The gentleman above is one of them.) We finished the book with a feeling that all future spiritual writers ought to be educated at Downside: you'll see what we mean. *Illus. by the author.* $3.25

A SUMMARY of MORAL and PASTORAL THEOLOGY

by Henry Davis, S. J.

This is mostly for priests, of course, but there are plenty of good reasons why lay people should know something of the laws of the Church: laws which are the essence of common sense and much less rigid than many of us suppose. $5.00

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SHEED & WARD **New York 3**

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Books

Duveen, S. N. Behrman. Random House. $3.50.

AMERICA's pretensions to cultural supremacy have been badly knocked about during the past few years by the stunning receptions our more sophisticated cousins abroad have given such events as the Tyrone Power, Rita Hayworth and Elizabeth Taylor weddings. Now it appears that our efforts in another important field, in which there seemed no question of our pre-eminence — salesmanship — have a long way to go to match the standard set by an Englishman, Joseph Duveen, Lord Millbank, perhaps the most extraordinary art dealer of all time.

In one of those accidents of history, Duveen came to the United States, in possession of a fair collection of paintings, just about the time this expanding nation's new crop of millionaires was going through the acute psychological torment of the *nouveau riche* —wondering what to do with all the money without giving it back. In a carefully controlled whirlwind of salesmanship he proceeded, for the next four decades, to separate the hard-headed tycoons of steel, one-arm lunchrooms, five-and-ten-cent stores, newspapers, etc., from millions, in return for introducing them to the old masters and the chance to share reflected immortality.

Buying with the audacity with which he sold, Duveen kept the art market (as savagely competitive a field as home appliances) at astronomical heights and parlayed his already substantial wealth into a fortune. This "exalted middleman" convinced his clients that it was easy to get fifty-thousand-dollar pictures, but quite an accomplishment to get quarter-of-a-million-dollar ones, promoted fierce competition among them, and made them pay premiums for the privilege of paying him the highest prices.

S. N. Behrman, one of our most distinguished playwrights, has lavished his many gifts on this "profile" of an unusual man and the fantastic period of American finance in which he felt so at home. Behrman's laconic wit ("Coolidge and Mellon saw much of each other, conversing almost entirely in pauses") is never cruel, although the temptation is great, and he can write with beautifully simple understanding of the loneliness and fearlessness that great wealth must often bring to its owners.

The more fastidious may find it distasteful to realize that our having the National Gallery and some of the finest art collections in the world is due almost directly to a very elevated type of wild haggling brought to a peak of perfection by the man Sir Osbert Sitwell called "the greatest salesman of his time." Duveen made our champion, Elmer ("Don't Sell the Steak, Sell the Sizzle") Wheeler seem almost inarticulate, but we are greatly indebted to him. Sizzlemanship may have made this country big and strong, but Duveenmanship raised its artistic and intellectual standards. It's an engaging story, superbly told.

PAUL V. FARRELL.

998. *Edward Hyams. Pantheon.* $2.75.

A YOUNG radar officer in the British Navy celebrates V-E Day by welding a baby carriage and a pawn-broker's sign to the mast of a neutral corvette. A coat of paint later, officers and a war correspondent begin to wonder at the weird thing. Other radar men, unwilling to admit their ignorance, speak vaguely about new radar developments, and soon the Royal Navy's bureaucracy has given the object paper identity—Type 998. And paper identity being fully as good and much more permanent than real identity, Type 998 grows in mystery and reputation until bureaucratic momentum and a coincidence or two make it known as the most powerful weapon in history, and it becomes the weapon that ends wars. In fact, before the end of the novel, 998's confused and pursued inventor begins to wonder if the thing *does* work.

Edward Hyams' ingenious plot, however, is merely a coincidental scaffolding for his rather cynical opinions on a good many contemporary phenomena: politics and politicians, the press, democracy, and on through an impressively catholic list even unto Mr. Churchill's prose. He is an excellent satirist, if an undiscriminating one. The Soviets claim to have 998 for the dialectical reason that "Since it was impossible that the decadent science of the West could have invented anything not possible to Soviet science, the USSR would soon possess the secret, and there could be no harm in anticipating the happy day." Democracy, says Mr. Hyams: ". . . in Britain government by a handful of Trade Union officials; in America by a handful of bankers; in Russia by a handful of technicians; in France . . . but Sir Lewis shrank from contemplating that final example." A neutral international organization to administer the new weapon was rejected by the Soviets because they would admit none but *"Communist* neutrals . . . Communist neutrality was far more neutral than any other kind." The American refusal was more involved: "the President's Bill to accept the service was thrown out by Congress owing to a powerful lobby by the electronics interests. Another Bill, prepared by a Republican Senator, proposed the formation of a company of private capitalists to lease the 998 service . . . and resell the service to the States. . . . However, the bill failed to pass, owing to violent agitation on the part of the Metal Workers Union, who objected to their lives being saved by aluminum processed in Europe, at low wages. . . ." If you enjoy this sort of trap shooting, you can have a fine time with 998, because it is superb satire.

However, there are two problems which are deeply involved in this novel. They are both crucially important, and are given a treatment here which, in my opinion, is thoroughly irresponsible.

First there is a political problem. Mr. Hyams, while he has sympathy for the Europeans and British as im-

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poverished men more or less of good will, apparently regards the two modern political giants as a pair of assassins. He would seem to belong to the body of thought which takes a Marxian view of the United States and a western view of the Soviet Union. He is left in a pleasingly independent and irresponsible position.

Judging from this book, Hyams would sympathize with Bertrand Russell's recent statement that the United States is as much a police state as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, and Russell's contention that the issue of freedom vs. totalitarianism enters "not at all" into the West's struggle with the Soviet Union. As much of a hero as Hyams has in his novel is the scientist Pflumbaum, who takes the 998 joke and makes it the gigantic international deception it finally becomes.

Pflumbaum was booted out of Russia because he had made "his little, harmless, so-Jewish joke about the inability of even the world-shaking will of I. V. Stalin to control the motions of an electron . . . he recalled the cold, humorless eyes, like pointed tools of steel, of his powerful host, eyes turned on him speculatively, boring into him, seeking the suspected core of disloyalty. . . ." He left the United States because he had said that men were like electrons in that they were part of a larger order, and had obligations to the other members of the order, were "not free to leave the atom and set up in business for themselves." And again he saw ". . . men with cold, humorless eyes . . . a caste of men who, in loyalty to a Law of property, which was becoming a ruthless terror, had given up their humanity." In short, the agents of the FBI.

There is value to Americans in seeing themselves so characterized. When Europeans of sincerity and intelligence can damn us as totalitarians, it is past time for us to look very hard at how badly we have been panicked by the Soviets.

But Mr. Hyams has paid a price for doing us this favor. His attack has peripheral justification but is essentially untrue. America is not a police state. There is no organized, legal suppression of unorthodox opinion and political rebels, other than those persons who advocate the overthrow of the Constitution by force. The FBI operates under legal restraints and its chief has refused certain proffered powers which he felt could prove dangerous. No number of private abuses can alter those facts. I think that Mr. Hyams' hatred of totalitarians and his indignation at the patent medicines, Paris post cards, and cheap cosmetics, which are the "products of capitalism in flower," have led him to pay a very high price indeed.

THE second problem Mr. Hyams brings up is that of the responsibility of the modern scientist. He has stated his reason for writing 998:

> . . . because I believe that science and scholarship have become dangerously irresponsible at the same time as they have become esoteric, and that the death of a philosophical state of mind will be fatal to our civilization. The mantle of priests has fallen on the shoulders of the physicists and biologists, and very awkwardly they are wearing it. In democracy, which is nevertheless the least evil form of government possible in industrial civilizations, politicians are necessarily the most contemptible of humanity, since the elector naturally chooses as his representative a man to whom he can feel superior, to make up for the fact that this man is going to make laws and enforce them. Consequently it was the duty of scientists to take full responsibility for their own work and withhold from the politicians anything likely to be dangerous in a world made up of overworked, underpaid psychotics. Instead, in return for the adulation of their fellow citizens, and for the feeling of power and mystery which they enjoy, the scientists have put into our hands instruments of destruction which we do not understand and which, as moral delinquents and psychopaths, we shall use for the most horrible destructive purposes. Our culture will not be healthy until science is reduced to its proper place . . . as the tool of humane and eclectic men.

This sort of statement is almost impossible to deal with because of its despair. If the author seriously believes that this is a psychopathic society governed by contemptible men, then there is little that can be said to hearten him. Under those circumstances, a scientist would be mad to make atom bombs.

But take another supposition. Say that the world was made up of men afflicted by weaknesses and evil, but capable of nobility. Say that some of those people had achieved an imperfect but functioning political democracy, and a way of life that provided the essential material possessions of life to the great majority of its people, even though allowing gross waste and enormous power in the hands of a limited number. Say that those people had their freedom threatened by totalitarians. Is it irresponsible for the scientist to contribute to that struggle?

It is a choice that is very familiar to men of this decade: technologically-perfected devastation, or slavery. You take your choice, and your choice would seem to depend on how much experience you may have had with slavery, or with war. On whether you have a wife and children to die, or only yourself; or how willing you are to see great tragedy committed in the name of the great abstraction: freedom. But whatever side you take, you commit yourself to a political, moral position. You accept the imperfection of your stand, and the disposition towards corruption that it carries within it like an unborn child.

Those who do not take a stand, the embittered as well as those whom Waldemar Gurian calls the "naive perfectionists," say that because nothing is perfect, nothing is practicable. Theirs is the position, I believe, of the dilettante, not of the "humane and eclectic man." Mr. Hyams is of their camp, and his book is their tract.

WILLIAM PFAFF.

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A Catholic Speaks His Mind on America's Religious Conflict. Thomas Sugrue. Harper. $1.

THIS little book arouses diametrically conflicting reactions. A Catholic reviewer must be struck with the author's sincerity and should be moved by his zeal. The objective of easing religious tensions in this country is obviously both timely and laudable. And I, for one, am in hearty agreement with Mr. Sugrue that the Church and American Catholics could do with a lot more self-criticism (although the author has to spoil this point by contending that there simply isn't *any*.).

But where did Thomas Sugrue get his notions about theology? He ascribes to the Church some of the most extreme convictions. He would have it that, by Catholic definition, "man's ideal state [would be] a society where the Church and the State are one," for example.

And how is it possible for a man speaking as a Catholic to deliver himself of sentiments such as this: "All religious roads lead in the end to God . . . many roads are necessary for the many kinds of people." Or again: "Jesus did not found a state; he suggested a Church." The shades and nuances of many of the opinions he flings out are anything but Catholic in feeling.

Mr. Sugrue's defense appears to be that he approaches things as a mystic, who reaches the stage where "all denominations fall away and the soul is alone with God." He does not claim to be a theologian. Yet *A Catholic Speaks His Mind* abounds in curious theological speculations.

It is legitimate to ask at this juncture in what way this volume can be expected to bring about better interfaith understanding. Does the willingness of a man to criticize the genuine and imagined failings of his own church inevitably produce such a result? That would seem to be Thomas Sugrue's hope in the matter. But has, in fact, its pre-publication in article form — and the widespread reporting of his message — led American Catholics to go in for any salubrious breast-beating? And does his distorted portrait of the Church reassure Jews and Protestants, or give confirmation to some of their most needless fears?

EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

The Drum Singers. Lau Shaw. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

THIS is a novel about the theater in war-torn China. The title refers to the Chinese art of drum singing — the blending of folk literatures and folk music to the accompaniment of a drum, a pair of castinets, and a three-stringed instrument called sanhsien. In his story, the author beautifully illustrates the universality of theatrical temperament, pride, tradition and superstition. He is writing about show people, and they are show people everywhere.

The characters are theatrical artists first and Chinese second. Indeed, we forget their background except when some Chinese custom is described. In America, whistling in the dressing room brings bad luck; in China, the star offers ceremonial offerings to the God of Show Business and the God of Wealth to ward off bad luck. The fears and aspirations of Fang Pao Ching in organizing his theater and managing his troupe are the worries and hopes of theatrical managers whatever their national origin. The theater of China's war years comes to life in this novel.

The Fang and Tang families, with whom the story is concerned, practice the art of drum singing to earn their livelihoods. Their lives become entangled in bomb-threatened Chungking in 1938. We meet Jeweled Lute, professional singer and prostitute; Useful Fang, cultured, wise, educated; Phoenix Girl, untalented, longing for someone to want her; Fang Pao Ching, whose life becomes one desperate effort to keep his drum troupe together and to keep a careful eye on his naive, maturing adopted daughter, Lotus Charm.

In Fang Pao Ching we have represented the ancient Chinese cultural pattern and how it slowly changes under the influence of modern times. Lotus Charm, the central figure in the story, is a young girl baffled by her awakening emotions and her maturing body; but Lotus Charm is not just a

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Chinese girl searching for the meaning of love—she is the eternal adolescent seeking to piece together the veiled hints of what love and sex involve.

The characters are real, warm, interesting. Their story is an absorbing one. *The Drum Singers* enhances the growing reputation of a most skilful novelist. JEROME SMILEY.

The Devil in the Desert. Paul Horgan. Longmans. $1.50.

PAUL HORGAN'S story first appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* as a "novelette" and has been anthologized several times since. Now we have it in hard covers by itself, which may or may not be a publisher's risk. It is not, however, a novelette, bearing no resemblance at all to a novel, but a rather long short story, or as the present publisher compromisingly and happily calls it, a "legend."

Father Louis Bellefontaine sets out on his twice a year mission into the mesquite deserts of the Rio Grande country on his horse Pancho. He is ill and an old man, really too old to attempt the trip, but his superior, a younger man, hasn't the heart to tell him he must not go. At his first stop, the house of Encarnadino Guerra, Father Louis is begged not to go on because of his health but to return. His pride is too much for him and he rails at Guerra for trying to halt him in his mission. Later that day in the desert he reproves himself for his rage and as penance resolves not to eat or drink until nightfall.

In midafternoon he seeks rest in the brush and there is struck by a rattlesnake. He charges the snake to leave him and then, in his delirium, sees the snake reappear, the devil himself, and in the ensuing discourse between priest and snake, the dying priest, brandishing the weapons of love and faith, vanquishes the snake, leaving the devil exhausted and wounded in pride. Father Louis then frees his horse and dies.

Paul Horgan tells us this may have happened about one hundred years ago. For today it makes a pleasant and unusual story.

JOHN A. LYNCH.

St. Benedict Joseph Labré. Agnes de la Gorce. Sheed and Ward. $3.

HE consistently failed in everything he tried to do, everything which had any semblance of respectability. Finally he embraced a life of instability. He became a beggar, and an eternal pilgrim to the holy shrines of Europe. He was ridden with vermin, lived on the refuse of others, and still shared this kind of food with the poor; he was thrown into jails, mocked and attacked by the people in the streets. Yet there was something about him which betrayed itself like a sure sign to some of his contemporaries; it was a radiance which is described in some of the famous "holy pilgrims," those poorest of the poor who used to walk the highways of Russia.

"The Fiordi sisters described him as having a small fair beard, *barbetta biondina,* with rather long hair falling over his shoulders 'like a Nazarene,' as speaking with the utmost courtesy, and eating not like a com-

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mon beggar at Labré, his words worth treasuring. He blessed the bread: 'Bread is good. . . . Bread is good,' he repeated. As to a musician a simple chord can bring to mind the whole of a symphony, so this bread showed him God's love for man, the cause of every ecstasy he had, and the theme of the extempore sermon he now gave the three sisters.

" 'He said such beautiful things,' Virginia tells us, 'that I sat listening open-mouthed. I had never heard anything so wonderful before.' Sermons in church were never like that. 'To love God,' the pilgrim explained, 'you need three hearts in one, a heart of fire for him, a heart of flesh for your neighbor, and a heart of bronze for yourself.' "

In reading Miss de la Gorce's biography of St. Benedict Joseph Labré one keeps wondering what his fate would have been in our North American society today. Would he have been the subject of a large "file" in a social agency, would he have been given "aptitude tests," would he have been "classified"? (Category E, "Shiftless Psychopath"—we have developed quite a terminology, you know.) He was not useful in a "functional society," worse luck. But there is no reason for worry. The Church in her wisdom has already classified him—Category A. He who had been refused entry into every contemplative community he ever tried (and he tried quite a number), who quite wilfully and consciously chose the life of abject poverty, the life of an uprooted one, an outcast, a hobo—he has been canonized. And today, Benedict Joseph Labré, the eternally Displaced Person, must have a great significance for thousands of people who are endlessly migrating along the roads of the world.

Agnes de la Gorce tells his story vividly enough, with the cultural background of Europe just before the French Revolution, and the elements of Jansenism which penetrated his restless adolescence. One gets the impression that her writing is patterned after the biographies of saints by Ghéon—a good pattern to follow. The translation by Rosemary Sheed is excellent. Read this book, preferably just before you go to attend the next monster rally of the Catholic Ladies' Something-or-other Society at the Ball Room of the X Hotel in Y City.

KARL STERN.

REVIEWERS

Paul V. Farrell is an editor for the Conover-Mast publishing company.

Jerome Smiley served with occupation troops in the Far East after World War II.

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Karl Stern is a practicing psychiatrist and author of the Christopher prize-winning *Pillar of Fire.*

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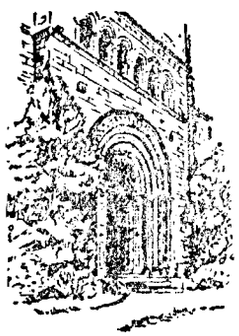

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